



The Party is not an NGO

The Party's Production

What the Party produces is communication.

The Party researches, discusses and prepares, formats, lays out, prints, and distributes words, pictures and “text” of all kinds. All of its processes go one way – towards communication.

Communication has costs. Communication costs are our main costs. And communication is labour-intensive.

This is the background to this part of our Induction course, which covers Fundraising and Events.

No Funders, No Donors, and No Sponsors

The Communist Party is not an NGO, and so there are, as a rule, no funders for the Communist Party of the kind that fund the usual NGOs. Such funders give for their own reasons, and to pursue their own agenda, which generally is not our agenda.

The working class must, as a rule, pay for its politics, and the

closer the working class comes to its revolutionary objectives, the more this will be true; so we must get used to it.

Therefore we begin with the presumption that there is no ready-made source of disinterested or charitable funding. We have to get used to managing without such imaginary sources. We have to look for sources of funding who are interested: partisan.

These may be our own members, and individuals who are, as the saying goes, “close to the Party”. They may include Trade Union structures at various levels. Or, they may include class forces that are not working-class, but who see their interests coinciding with those of the Party.

Managing without, and living off the land

The Party must manage without funds coming from above it. There is no “Manna from Heaven” for the Party.

The Party must to a large extent “live off the land”, and pay as it goes. At local level especially, it cannot spend money without raising money.

Party members meet with each other, and they meet with other structures. While doing so they pay their own way, treating party business as part of their lives. This is one part of “living off the land”.

To the extent that the Party needs to go further than this basic level of activity, of individual party members communicating using their own resources, then it must gather the means close at hand.

This means that the Party is, and must be, supported by the close community where it exists.

Close in time

The local Party will not usually be able to hold substantial funds over time. The idea of raising funds separately in time from the expenditure that the funds are raised for, is not the best model upon which which fundraising should conceived.

Rather, the fundraising effort and the activity upon which funds are going to be spent, should as far as possible be one and the same thing.

This principle can be taken one step further and made routine. We can then make it a rule that all activities of the Party should be fund-raising activities.

Accounting should be central, and it should be normal that there will be a surplus on all activities undertaken, which will be conserved by the Treasurer. In this way, the Treasurer's function becomes crucial to the fund-raising effort. But the Treasurer is not a fundraiser.

Actually, the Treasurer should be the last person to be involved in fundraising, as such. The Treasurer is the keeper, and not the raiser of funds.

Let us look at this in practice, remembering that we have already said, above, that what the Party produces is communication. Let us look at some different kinds of communication.

Branch

At all Branch and Committee meetings (BGM, BEC and Sub-Committee Meetings), money should be collected and passed to the Treasurer of the Branch, without exception. It should be normal that these collections generate a surplus over expenses. Vouchers should be generated, records kept and reports made, in the manner indicated elsewhere in this part.

Literature and Merchandise

World-wide, the Communist Parties have a tradition of being book-sellers and hard-copy news-and-opinion outlets, for its own members and for its community. The SACP needs to reverse the priority from money-making to propaganda; but having done so, then to make more money than before from these activities.

The same applies to merchandise. The Party should not try to sell general clothing, but should sell for the occasion. The occasion should drive the sales. Sell for wearing on the day, and not for taking home.

Solidarity speech

You are invited to attend a meeting, and make an input. You ask for a contribution to the Party. Why not? The Party can only exist if it is supported by the working class. We do not have to apologise for that fact. Asking for funds for the party should be normal.

Local Public Meeting

Likewise, if the party holds a Public Meeting, it should call for contributions, at the door, by collection in the crowd with buckets, and by direct request from the platform.

How to do a collection

One way to do a collection from the platform of a meeting or a rally is to use good-humoured and popular person, and have that person call for large notes. “Who is going to give R200? Come on all you government officials. Come on all you senior managers” And so forth. Even if you only get one public sight of a R200 note, it sets the example for the next round, which is the call for R100 notes. Then the shouter gets so many of those, and waves them around. There can be jokes. There could be a song. Then the next round calls for R50s. Time is taken. A good atmosphere⁴ is cultivated. Then the R20s. Then the R10s. People can give twice. There is no rule that says because you gave R100, you cannot give R20. And so it goes until the fundraiser asks for all the metal cash money in the house.

The fundraiser needs helpers with buckets.

This method of fund-raising from an audience works well and it makes people feel good.

The money must go straight to the Treasurer, and here can also be seen, again, the reason why the Treasurer is not a fundraiser.

- A suitable reading-text text has not yet been found.
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